

The Role of Corporate Defense Services in International Security Strategy

National military strategy involves evaluating all elements of power, analyzing their capabilities and limitations, and incorporating these tools into a course of military action to secure political goals. A fast-growing industry in the U.S. and abroad is the sector that provides support for military operations in peace and war. The companies in this category provide everything from logistical services, to research and development, to the drafting of doctrine, to direct involvement in combat operations. The privatization and outsourcing of activities that were once solely the province of sovereign governments provide challenges and opportunities to planners and analysts involved in national security strategy. This paper will show that the trend toward privatization of military functions is sharply increasing in the United States and abroad, will point out some of the implications of the increase in defense contractor services, and will argue that the use of corporate personnel to augment U.S. armed forces acts as a force multiplier that is necessary, but not sufficient, to assure national security for the future.

THE CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION

The reasons for this evolution are clear. There is a growing demand for forceful intervention, driven in part by exposure of humanitarian crises by the media and non-governmental organizations exploiting new communication technologies such as the Internet and live satellite broadcasts. This publicity drives public outrage and spurs leaders to action. Yet at the same time, international organizations and other potential rescuers are stymied by an inability or unwillingness to meet all the needs for strategic peace-making and peacekeeping initiatives that have arisen in the post-Cold War fragmentation of global politics.

The United Nations has declared a willingness and a desire to intervene against human rights abuses, wherever they may be occurring around the world. In the wake of the 1999 violence in East Timor, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called for a new era of UN interventionism: “there are a great number of peoples who need more than just words of sympathy from the international community. They need a real and sustained commitment to help end their cycles of violence and launch them on a safe passage to

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prosperity.”¹ The problem is that the United Nations is not equipped to provide the fast, cohesive, competent response required to counter hostile forces.

The number of forces deployed in peacekeeping operations on behalf of the UN stood at more than 75,000 in 1994, at a cost of \$3.6 billion, of which about seventy percent was spent on operations in Europe.² This represented a sharp increase in activity compared to the first four decades of UN operations. The number dwindled to 12,000 personnel deployed in 1999, at a cost of \$870 million, but appears to be on the rise again. In April 2000, the UN General Assembly approved funds for new operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor, and directed its advisory body to consider new ways of dividing the costs among member states.³

The nature of peacekeeping operations is also evolving. Before the end of the Cold War, the UN would deploy troops only after cease-fires, when the belligerent parties agreed to accept them. The international forces were to act impartially toward all those involved in the hostilities. Now, the UN is sending troops inside borders of sovereign states, into areas where there is no such consent for intervention and violence is still on-going, for “peace enforcement operations.” The reason for this transformation is that the nature of war itself has changed.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, civilians made up fifteen percent of the casualties of war. Now, wars are fought not primarily between nations on battlefields, but among sectors of single populations, in streets and villages. Civilians account for ninety percent of those killed in conflict.⁴ There is a new sense that a state’s sovereignty does not provide it a justification to brutalize its own citizens with impunity. When effective action is possible to save populations at risk, even if the risk comes from their own leaders, there is a moral imperative to intervene.

The question is whether this unprecedented way of dealing with humanitarian disasters, given the resources available, will yield viable results. Lacking a standing

¹ Colum Lynch. “Annan Calls for Stronger UN Role.” *The Washington Post*, September 21, 1999, pg. A13.

² Christopher Dandeker and James Gow. “The Future of Peace Support Operations: Strategic Peacekeeping and Success.” *Armed Forces and Society* 23, issue 3 (Spring 1997): 327-347. The European operations were in Cyprus, Georgia, and the former Yugoslavia.

³ UN Newservice, April 10, 2000.

force, the international organization cannot muster enough cohesive, trained troops in time for urgent action. A shortage of funds, a plethora of UN bureaucracy dealing with sometimes ill-defined objectives, an unwillingness of many nations to commit troops, and disagreement among veto-holding members of the Security Council with conflicting national interests, all compromise the ability of the world body to respond.

LET UNCLE SAM DO IT

The answer to these troubles has increasingly been the United States, the “globo-cop” or “911” provider of the new security age. It is a function about which many are uneasy, both in the U.S. and abroad. American military forces have been overly taxed by the proliferation of military operations other than war, which have increased in number since the fall of the Iron Curtain. In the wake of bipolarism, the U.S. has been thrust into the role of a world stabilizing force, but the price of leadership has been high for its troops.

In Kosovo, for example, more than 30,000 reservists and 1,000 warplanes were deployed against Belgrade’s forces, the Navy diverted a carrier battle group from the Persian Gulf, and the Army sent 3,000 troops to support the Apache helicopter battalion in Albania. The Air Force ran dangerously low on the Joint Direct Attack Munition precision guided bomb and was forced to commit a third of its aerial tankers, in addition to electronic-warfare and ground-surveillance aircraft, to Operation Allied Force.⁵ According to DoD Doctrine, U.S. forces should be able to handle small-scale contingencies like Kosovo at the same time as it takes on two major theater wars. The pressure of just this one operation on personnel and armaments, however, created both morale problems among over-deployed troops and weapons shortages.

An All Volunteer Force meets this sharply increased operations tempo. It is a military greatly reduced in number since the days of the Vietnam draft. The services now face severe problems of recruitment and retention as they compete with a booming U.S. economy. The All Volunteer Force has also led to higher logistics costs aimed at keeping soldiers and sailors well taken care of when deployed.

⁴ “Kofi Annans’s Critique.” *The New York Times*. September 22, 1999.

⁵ Col. M. Thomas Davis, USA Ret. “The U.S. Military is Doing Too Much with Too Little.” *The Wall Street Journal*. May 4, 1999.

A number of military personnel are uncomfortable with the change in warfare brought about by the disappearance of the bipolar Cold War structure. Instead of facing traditional theater engagement, soldiers are confronted by skirmishes and small-scale guerrilla-type operations. In addition, the U.S. is increasingly committed to long-term peacekeeping operations rather than the traditional combat many recruits anticipated when they signed up for duty. The long-term deployments and sometimes-muddled objectives of the operations have dampened morale and diminished the desirability of a military career.

A 1994 survey of 259 U.S. soldiers deployed as part of a UN Protection Force in Macedonia showed that the troops had mixed feelings about serving in a monitoring mission. While some considered the tour of duty useful, others opposed placing U.S. troops under a non-American UN commander, said the time spent in such deployments made their combat skills deteriorate, and expressed the view that civilians, reservists, or noncombat soldiers should carry out the work.⁶ A recent survey of 760 Army officers studying at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth found deep morale problems among younger officers. One group pointed to peacekeeping as a source of dissatisfaction, saying it was “not why we joined the Army.”⁷

The United States has been reluctant to commit troops in conflicts in which there is not a clear vital national interest. Secretary Cohen specifically ruled out deployments to Africa to confront inter-ethnic warfare following the debacle in Somalia.⁸ In Asia, Americans made up only 300 of 7,500 soldiers participating in the Australian-led multinational peacekeeping force that entered East Timor in 1999. Even that modest contribution raised some questions.

The Director of Defense Policy at the Cato Institute, Ivan Eland, commented that if the U.S. always provides its uniquely effective capabilities of intelligence and logistics support for such operations, such as the use of C-17 aircraft to haul artillery and supplies,

⁶ Laura L. Miller. “Do Soldiers Hate Peacekeeping? The Case of Preventive Diplomacy Operations in Macedonia.” *Armed Forces & Society* 23, number 3 (Spring 1997): 415-450.

⁷ Thomas E. Ricks. “Younger Officers Quit Army at Fast Clip: Study Finds Little Trust in Senior Leadership.” *The Washington Post*, April 17, 2000, pg. A1.

⁸ The remarks were quoted in “‘Ties Yes, U.S. Troops No’ in Africa, Cohen Says,” an article by Linda D. Kozaryn, American Forces Press Service, Feb. 11, 2000. (defenselink.mil.news)

its allies will have no incentive to develop those capabilities on their own.⁹ He warned that minor participation has the potential of leading to greater commitment, with the risk of the U.S. being pulled into a quagmire. Yet the calls for humanitarian intervention, and the global interdependence that has developed as a by-product of the unrestricted flow of capital, communications and transportation, demand a response when violence engulfs societies around the world.

THE REGIONAL APPROACH

Among the alternative approaches is a movement to empower others to handle their own affairs, on national or regional bases. This is founded on the recognition that “those states which have the most to lose from the breakdown of order in their neighborhood have the greatest incentive to preserve order” and thus should bear the responsibility of keeping peace in their regions.¹⁰ To that end, the U.S. is providing stepped-up training and equipping to indigenous militaries and regional organizations in areas of conflict, rather than using American troops, to encourage local solutions for local problems.

Some regional defense organizations were established in the aftermath of the Second World War and remain robust into the new century, such as the North American Treaty Organization. At the same time, the European Union has begun initial planning on a regional military force as a complement to NATO, the “Eurocorps.” In theory, it would deploy up to 60,000 troops within two months for European collective defense operations of up to one year.¹¹

In the Persian Gulf region, Defense Secretary William Cohen launched a plan in March 1999 to work bilaterally and multilaterally with regional partners in developing their capabilities in active defense, passive defense, shared early warning, consequence management, and medical countermeasures to chemical and biological weapons.

⁹ Ivan Eland. “Death by a Thousand Cuts.” *USA Today*, September 22, 1999, pg. 18.

¹⁰ This is the security context of what Hugh DeSantis labels “mutualism” in his monograph “Mutualism: An American Strategy for the Next Century.” National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies, number 162, May 1999, pg. 4.

¹¹ Peter Finn. “Six in NATO Upset Over EU Corps Plan.” *The Washington Post*, April 9, 2000, pg. A16.

Additionally, U.S. Central Command is sponsoring a series of military exercises to train Gulf nationals in what is called the Cooperative Defense Initiative.¹²

In sub-Saharan Africa, U.S. special operations forces carry out much of this work. They have trained foreign military forces in 22 countries in reconnaissance, small-unit tactics and counterinsurgency techniques as a means of building military-to-military contacts. Under the African Regional Response Initiative, about 400 U.S. troops are training counterparts in seven countries. In addition, Congress has funded the African Center for Security Studies, a program to teach African officers and civilians about civil-military relations and defense system management.¹³ The \$42 million, six-year program was approved on the grounds that Africa will not become prosperous until it achieves greater political stability.

The reluctance of developed nations to risk casualties, and the structural weaknesses within international organizations which hinder effective humanitarian operations, have encouraged the use of non-governmental enterprises to undertake some of the functions needed to shape the security environment in areas of potential conflict and active hostilities. In Bosnia, for example, Muslim and Croat officials changed their national defense law to allow the integration of the Muslim Bosnian army with Bosnian Croat military forces. The change cleared the way for an American firm, Military Professional Resources Inc. (MPRI) of Virginia, to sign a multi-million dollar contract to train the joint force.¹⁴

Private companies are proving themselves capable of training forces, implementing rapid-mobilization peacemaking or long-term peacekeeping operations, and assuming other duties that major state powers performed in the past. The thesis here is that, for good or ill, this phenomenon must be recognized and factored into calculations of national security strategy in the future.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES PRIVATE FORCES CAN BRING

There is a broad range of private military companies and corporations with defense components. For the purposes of this article, we shall consider the actual and

¹² Jim Garamone. "Cooperative Defense Initiative Seeks to Save Lives." American Forces Press Service. April 11, 2000.

¹³ Dana Priest. "U.S. Deepens African Military Contacts; Pentagon Officials Tout Humanitarian, Human Rights Benefits." *The Washington Post*, December 13, 1998, pg. A43.

potential contributions of companies which work primarily under contract to recognized governments in exchange for monetary compensation. Some have achieved positive outcomes in conflicts throughout the world. On the international level, because they work only for recognized regimes, they reinforce the nation-state system by imposing stability and countering threats to sovereign governments.

On a national level, in some cases, notably Sierra Leone and Angola, private military companies were able to employ coercive force decisively to impose temporary cease-fires. Sometimes the only way to end fighting is for an exponentially more powerful or agile force to compel peace by superior might. It is a stopgap solution, but one that can create the cessation of violence needed for societies to rebuild and leaders to negotiate. As one observer put it: “Although the idea of killing to end killing confounds the genteel sensibility, the fact remains that wars need to be won, one way or another.”¹⁵

There are other benefits that could be gained as a result of the efforts of private military companies. In training foreign forces, they have the opportunity to professionalize other armies, and, in the course of this education, advocate positive values such as observance of fundamental human rights guarantees and civilian authority over the military. Private defense services can act in the interests of an officially neutral state while offering the political equivalent of plausible deniability to their employers. Security companies have provided vital protection of businesses and investments in war-torn areas from banditry throughout history. The fact that they are able to protect industries in besieged regions today allows those companies to function and the host countries to profit from foreign direct investment.

THE THREAT TO SECURITY PRIVATE FORCES MAY BRING

A compelling case can be argued, in counterpoint, that it would be naïve to ignore the potential dangers to national and international security raised by a proliferation of private military firms. In many cases, these companies signal a loss of control for the state. One of the fundamental defining aspects of sovereignty is that it confers the authority, within the bounds of international law, to use violence in defense of national

¹⁴ John Pomfret. “Bosnian Force Nears Approval of U.S. Training.” *The Washington Post*, July 7, 1996.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Rubin. “An Army of One’s Own.” *Harper’s Magazine*, February 1997: pg. 55.

policies. Ceding this right to for-profit concerns raises troubling questions of accountability and the potential devolution into anarchy.

Such a process has precedent in modern western history. Historian Janice Thomson argues persuasively that European state leaders began to rely on nonstate actors as the feudal system of military mobilization began to break down. Rulers endowed mercantile companies with powers previously restricted to sovereigns to allow them to conduct business and prosper economically. The short-term result was that these European companies were successful in establishing a presence abroad, gaining profit and serving the interests of state leaders. The long-term result, Thomson concludes, is that states lost the ability to control the mercantile companies, privateers and mercenary armies and navies.

More importantly, rulers were unable to resist the temptation to use these nonstate actors for their own ends. Since the fact that these entities were private gave the leaders plausible deniability, states could share the bounty when their efforts were successful, and deny knowledge of the operations when they failed. This ability to “authorize nonstate violence while they denied responsibility and accountability for its consequences” gave state rulers “maximum freedom with minimum responsibility,”¹⁶ a process that finally led to dangerous lack of constraints. Today, one of the defining characteristics of a corporate soldier is that they are hired when a crisis breaks out, and dismissed when it has passed. This allows leaders to distance themselves from their decision to hire private forces, particularly if the operations fail.

THE QUESTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE GENEVA PROTOCOLS

Accountability for violence and behavior during war is at the heart of the Geneva Conventions, yet these protocols were written for sovereign states, not nonstate actors such as private military companies. Article 47 of Protocol I, included as a result of pressure by African states, provided the most widely accepted definition of “mercenary” in international law. It defines mercenary as a person who is specially recruited to fight in an armed conflict, takes part in the hostilities, is motivated by private gain and is

¹⁶ Janice E. Thomson. *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pg. 43.

promised material compensation substantially in excess of that paid to national forces, is not a citizen of the state in conflict nor a resident of the state in which the war is taking place, is not a member of the armed forces to the conflict, and has not been sent as a member of the armed forces by another state. All of these must apply for the individual to be considered a mercenary. The definition is critical because, under the provision, a mercenary does not have the right to be a combatant or prisoner of war.

Legal scholars argue the law is full of holes. Article 47 does not label the mercenary as a criminal, nor forbid signatories from recruiting mercenaries. It does not say that those who recruit, use, finance or train mercenaries are criminals. It exempts advisers, technicians, and members of armed forces sent by their governments, such as members of the French Foreign Legion or the Nepalese Gurkhas.¹⁷ It emphasizes the motivation of the combatant, so would punish those who enlist for money but not those engaged in war for ideological reasons. Of increasing importance is the fact that it leaves unclear the legal status of private military companies providing services to countries at war.

There are a number of arguments against applying the criteria of Article 47 to private companies. It says that the individual must be recruited to fight in a specific conflict, but the employees of private military companies often work on a long-term basis and not for one situation only. In some cases, however, individuals are hired to work on a specific contract, which could muddy this argument.

The requirement that the individual take part directly in combat would also appear to exclude foreign advisers, trainers and technicians, even if their motive is financial gain. ICRC commentary notes that “the increasingly perfected character of modern weapons, which have spread throughout the world at an ever-increasing rate, requires the presence of such specialists, either for the selection of military personnel, their training, or the correct maintenance of the weapons. As long as these experts do not take any direct part

¹⁷ However, the Argentine representative to the UN Security Council argued in 1982 that a valid analogy could be made between mercenaries and the Gurkha regiments of the British Army. The British representative responded that the Gurkhas are fully integrated with UK forces and are therefore not mercenaries, but the argument points to the need for a more precise definition. See Hilaire McCoubrey, *International Humanitarian Law: The Regulation of Armed Conflicts* (Dartmouth, UK: Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd., 1990), pg. 89.

in the hostilities, they are neither combatants nor mercenaries, but civilians who do not participate in combat.”¹⁸

The distinction between motivations for private gain, as opposed to ideological considerations, is difficult to establish in a court of law. Anyone alleged to be a mercenary would have the right to question that status, defining their status as an international volunteer¹⁹ and claiming that political sympathy prompted their participation. Finally, if those who are members of the armed forces of a party to the conflict are not considered mercenaries, any foreign combatants who assert allegiance to the country to which they are contracted to fight would be excluded.²⁰

Among the factors reducing the effectiveness of the treaty is that, because there are two Protocols, the first of which applies to international conflict and the second of which applies to civil wars, Article 47 cannot be used against mercenaries in conflicts within state borders. Yet many, if not most, of the conflicts in which mercenaries have allegedly been present, have been domestic.

Article 47 does not criminalize mercenary activities. It attempts to deny mercenaries prisoner-of-war status, but if a “mercenary” is not actively involved in combat, he or she would be considered a civilian and protected by Article 75 of Protocol I, which provides fundamental minimum guarantees to all those in the power of a party to the conflict. The U.S. military’s interpretation is that contractors are considered prisoners of war if captured.²¹ Given the proliferation of security forces for hire following the end of the Cold War, these slippery legal issues are likely to be tested in the near future.

¹⁸ Commentary on “Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977, internet edition, www.icrc.org/ihl.nst/1a13044f3, pg. 5.

¹⁹ Examples of “international volunteers” would include U.S. citizens who joined Allied Forces in the First and Second World Wars before the entry of the U.S. into those conflicts, and foreign forces that served with the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War.

²⁰ Shearer, David. *Private Armies and Military Intervention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pg. 18.

²¹ Department of the Army, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Installation, Logistics, and Environment, SAIL-LOG, Information Paper, October 23, 1997 states:

“If captured, a contractor’s status will depend on the type of conflict, applicability of any relevant international agreements, and the nature of the hostile force. When the United States is a participant in an international armed conflict, contractors are entitled to be protected as POWs if captured by a force that is a Geneva/Hague Convention signatory.”

WHEN WAR MEANS JOB SECURITY

In some parts of the world, such as the former Soviet Union, thousands of displaced former combatants have formed security companies. In Ukraine, for example, continued economic turmoil has left former military personnel out of work. Several hundred are reported to have agreed to serve as mercenaries in the Caucasus and abroad. Traveling under the guise of tourists, workers or specialists, they serve in regular military forces as well as in mercenary bands, despite the risk of incurring several legal penalties under Ukrainian law if caught and convicted.²² In areas of social and political destabilization, mercenaries can be expected to flourish if policing and security apparatuses fail.

While few have openly ventured into engaging in actual combat, the threat that these firms could evolve into skilled, cohesive fighting organizations at odds with the state is conceivable. As one analyst expressed it: “I think the major worry that everyone has about this sort of thing is, will these forces become a force unto themselves, kind of rogue elephants?”²³ Small groups with weapons and military training could also take on political aspirations, and create new well-armed threats of insurrection to established regimes. Alternatively, the personnel of private military companies might act against the interests of a government as a consequence, intended or otherwise, of providing services to a transnational corporation. Ironically, training foreign forces may also have the effect of prolonging conflict by making the adversaries more evenly matched and leveling the playing field.

To what extent could “officers of fortune,” or today’s “modern mercenaries” foment or perpetuate instability to generate contracts? There are two sides to the argument. Some say that military firms or contractors are motivated to maintain stable conditions in the countries in which they work in order to ensure the governments or industries that employ them will have the wherewithal to make the payments. On the other hand, an end to conflict could also mean an end to their contracts, so they might collude with local figures to keep the hot spots inflamed and maintain their employment.

²² “Ukrainian Mercenaries Serve in Many Conflict Areas.” *Special Warfare* 11, issue 2 (Spring 1998), pg. 41.

²³ Georgetown University professor Herbert Howe, quoted in *Parameters* 29, issue 2 (Summer 1999), pg. 103.

They could take it a step further, and foment conflict where none existed before in order to generate employment in lean times.

ARMIES FOR HIRE

Finally, some argue that the use of private defense forces cheapens the image of the military and its status in society by blurring the distinction between active duty servicemen and women, and consultants whose motive is profit. If soldiers become associated in the public mind with employees who go to war for the money, this thinking goes, it undermines the heroism, service and self-sacrifice that have long been the hallmark of military forces in the United States and other countries around the world. "It is hard to understand how one day the general in uniform is a selfless servant of the state motivated by love of country and dedicated to soldiers, and the day after retirement is selling his services to the highest foreign bidder," writes one active duty Army officer. "This contradicts the military ethic of selfless service and cheapens the profession of arms in the eyes of the public."²⁴

The use of private forces could also skew perceptions abroad of U.S. resolve regarding particular military operations. What are the long-term implications for U.S. security if allies perceive we are unwilling to share the burden of peacekeeping by committing citizens, but rely instead on profit-making enterprises?

The need to call on private forces may reveal fundamental flaws of governance. For weak regimes that must turn to private forces to stay in power because they cannot trust their own armies, there are issues of political legitimacy that may indicate the leaders should not be in power at all. For stable, developed states that must use corporate employees to carry out strategic goals, there may be a question of avoiding oversight. For example, an administration could employ a company, rather than military personnel, to undertake missions that Congress might not approve. The use of private forces may also be a wake-up call that an imbalance exists between political ambitions and the resources available to achieve them at a reasonable cost to the citizenry. What may be needed is not private military companies, but a reassessment of ends and means, commitments and resources.

IS PRIVATIZATION OF SOME DEFENSE FUNCTIONS INEVITABLE?

Even with all these caveats, some increase in the privatization of the military in the U.S. and abroad may be inevitable, given the drop in induction of military personnel, the rise in their attrition rates, and the need for the kind of specialized, high-tech skills to win future wars that only private industry can afford to employ. The potential growth of information warfare and information operations, for example, is increasing the demand for technically skilled computer operators who are so well compensated in the corporate sector that they are leaving behind formerly attractive military careers.

Some advocate that the United Nations meet its obligations to stop humanitarian disasters by maintaining a register of private forces under contract, subject to established regulations and some form of accountability, that could mobilize quickly when conflicts occur. What appears at first glance to be a cynical approach is less menacing when put in the context of creating the global equivalent of the French Foreign Legion or the legendary Gurkhas.

In *War and Anti-War: Making Sense of Today's Global Chaos*, futurologists Alvin and Heidi Toffler ponder such an eventuality: "Why not, when nations have already lost the monopoly of violence, consider creating volunteer mercenary forces organized by private corporations to fight wars on a contract-fee basis for the United Nations...?"²⁵

Theoretician Martin Van Creveld takes the view that in the future, as sovereignty is weakened by globalism, the change in the nature of states will prompt a change in the nature of war. Conventional wars fought by nations will be replaced by low-intensity conflicts carried out by the types of nonstate organizations that waged war in the past, such as tribes, city-states, commercial organizations, and private mercenary bands led by warlords. Political, ideological or nationalistic beliefs, he predicts, will no longer motivate combat; the pursuit of profit and personal glory will. "The spread of sporadic small-scale war will cause regular armed forces themselves to change form, shrink in size, and wither away. As they do, much of the day-to-day burden of defending society

²⁴ Colonel Bruce D. Grant, U.S. Army. "U.S. Military Expertise for Sale: Private Military Consultants as a Tool of Foreign Policy." Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, Essays 1998, pg. 107.

against the threat of low-intensity conflict will be transferred to the booming security business.”²⁶ Whatever form it takes, a greater reliance on private military organizations, as we have shown, is fraught with risk.

IS PRIVATIZATION A FORCE MULTIPLIER?

Some believe the risk is worth taking. Given proper parameters and well-defined missions, there may be legitimate roles for private contractors within national security strategy and international peacekeeping. If the interests of the contracting company are congruent with those of the employer, such as the United Nations, a private company may be a cost-effective alternative for peacekeeping, train and equip programs, and other roles. Such activities require the dispassionate, non-ideological, cost-conscious approach found in the corporate sector. Guidelines to govern the use of private forces would have to be established, along with a mechanism to rapidly deploy forces and just as rapidly to end their deployment, when the conflict is resolved.

The forces would have to be agile and cohesive, with a field command structure prepared to integrate with the armed forces of the nations served, and contracts would have to spell out with a high degree of specificity the role and purpose of the contracted company staff. With these conditions met, a number of functions now performed by military services could be responsibly outsourced.²⁷

This idea has found support in the U.S. and abroad. Lieutenant Colonel Ian Wing of the Australian Defence Studies Centre advocates the creation of an international register of all companies providing military and security-related services, upon which the United Nations could draw. He cites the advantages of providing a needed resource to

²⁵ Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Making Sense of Today's Global Chaos*. (London: Warner Books, 1995): pg. 281.

²⁶ Martin Van Creveld. *The Transformation of War*. (New York: The Free Press, 1991), pg. 207.

²⁷ Canadian scholar Paul McIvor suggests a spectrum of duties that companies could perform, including observation, disarmament, drug interdiction, election monitoring, coercive peace-making and non-coercive peace-keeping. He concludes “privatization of the peacekeeping function does not represent a threat to even-handed peacekeeping, rather it is an opportunity to remake peacekeeping strategy.” His article “Private Peacekeeping – Opportunity or Impossibility?” appeared in *Peacekeeping and International Relations* 27, issue 6 (Nov/Dec 1998): pg. 3.

the international organization, with the added benefit of regulating and promoting transparency and accountability in the private military industry.²⁸

Writing in *Peace Operations: Developing an American Strategy*, lawyer Christine Cervenak and retired Army officer George Raach argue that outsourcing offers cost efficiencies, preserves government-owned assets as a hedge against unseen contingencies, provides goods and services beyond the government's ability to supply, and allows governments to avoid spending funds to maintain capabilities easily available in the private sector. With the caveat that the government must retain control over how sensitive jobs are performed, they conclude "outsourcing has played a beneficial role in a number of peace operations and should be considered as an option in the future so that military forces can concentrate on core competencies."²⁹

While the employment of mercenaries is an ancient occupation, the rapid rise of the wide spectrum of entrepreneurs in military services, ranging from individual "dogs of war" to respectable, well-organized and law-abiding corporations, is a new and powerful phenomenon. Its potential impact merits inclusion in our overall thinking about the evolving direction of national security strategy.

²⁸ Lt. Colonel Ian Wing. "Fighting Other People's Wars: The Balance Sheet." Paper presented to the 'Australia/Papua-New Guinea Crime and the Bilateral Relationship' Conference at Old Parliament House, Canberra, 11-12 November 1998, pg. 31.

²⁹ Christine Cervenak and George T. Raach. "Contracting and Privatizing in Peace Operations." *Peace Operations: Developing an American Strategy*. (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1995.), pg. 150.

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